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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/917,536	07/27/2001	Sean James Martin	GB920010042US1	2124

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IBM CORPORATION
3039 CORNWALLIS RD.
DEPT. T81 / B503, PO BOX 12195
REASEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27709

EXAMINER

BLAIR, DOUGLAS B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2142

DATE MAILED: 09/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/917,536

Applicant(s)

MARTIN ET AL.

Examiner

Douglas B Blair

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 July 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-56 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-56 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-15, 19-35, and 39-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,606,661 to Agrawal et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,389,028 to Bondarenko et al..

3. As to claim 1, Agrawal teaches a method for regulating access by users to a scarce resource, said resource being capable of handling multiple concurrent accesses, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a request for access to the scarce resource (col. 3, lines 6-10); determining whether the access level for said scarce resource is at a desired maximum (col. 3, lines 6-10); responsive to determining that said access level is at desired maximum, placing said requester in a queue for access to said scarce resource (col. 3, lines 6-10); and access being available to said requester upon reaching the head of the queue and said access level dropping below said desired maximum (col. 3, lines 11-26); however Agrawal does not explicitly teach providing the requester with a notification that the request has been enqueued.

Bondarenko teaches providing a requester with a notification that the request has been enqueued (col. 7, line 20-col. 8, line 11).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Agrawal regarding the queueing of a request

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with the teachings of Bondarenko regarding providing notification to a requester about queue positioning because providing a notification gives a user an idea of when a resource will be available (Bondarenko, col. 3, lines 43-52).

4. As to claim 2, Bondarenko teaches a method of periodically providing a requester with updates on said requester's progress through the queue (col. 9, lines 18-54).

5. As to claim 3 and 4, Bondarenko teaches a method of issuing said request with a numbered ticket denoting said requester's position in the queue wherein the number is displayed to the requester (col. 9, lines 18-54).

6. As to claim 5, Bondarenko teaches a method of periodically providing the requester with updates on said requester's progress by informing said requester of the ticket number of the last user granted access to said scarce resource (col. 9, lines 18-54).

7. As to claim 6, Bondarenko teaches a method of calculating the average time taken to service the holder of each ticket number; and providing said requester with an estimated time to wait based on the calculated average (col. 9, lines 18-54).

8. As to claim 7, Bondarenko teaches a method of periodically providing the requester with updates responsive to the requester polling for such updates (col. 7, lines 36-54).

9. As to claim 8, Bondarenko teaches a method of downloading onto a requester's computer an executable program for initiating polling (col. 10, lines 1-32).

10. As to claim 9, Bondarenko teaches a method of storing information on said requester's position in the queue and information for the purpose of providing the requester with notifications said positional information being continually updated as said requester progresses through the queue (col. 9, lines 18-54).

11. As to claim 10, Bondarenko teaches a method of initiating updates to the requester on said requester's progress through the queue (col. 9, lines 18-54).
12. As to claim 11, Bondarenko teaches a method of providing a requester with notification when the access to the scarce resource is available (col. 9, lines 18-54).
13. As to claim 12, Bondarenko teaches a method where storing a request is responsive to determining that a requester is within a predetermined threshold of the head of the queue (col. 10, lines 49-65).
14. As to claim 13, Bondarenko teaches a method of providing a requester with an update on the requester's progress through the queue responsive to a requester re-requesting access to a resource (col. 9, lines 18-54).
15. As to claim 14, Bondarenko teaches a method wherein watch re-request presents a ticket number issued to the requester upon being placed in said queue, said method further comprising the step of: using said presented ticket number to determine whether access is available to said requester; and responsive to determining that access is available, granting said access (col. 9, lines 18-54).
16. As to claim 15, Bondarenko teaches a method wherein the step of granting access comprises: diverting said requester to a first server hosting said scarce resource (col. 9, lines 18-54).
17. As to claim 19, Bondarenko teaches a method wherein the step of determining whether said access level for said scarce resource is at a desired maximum comprises: tracking the number of users currently accessing the scarce resource; and computing said number with a predetermined maximum value (col. 9, lines 18-54).

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18. As to claim 20, Bondarenko teaches a method comprising the steps of: receiving a late request for access to said scarce resource from said requester having missed access when available; determining whether said scarce resource is able to accommodate access by said late requester; responsive to determining that it is possible to accommodate access, by said requester, granting access to said requester; and responsive to determining that it is not possible to accommodate access by said requester, re-queueing said requester (col. 9, lines 18-54).

19. Claims 16-18 and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,606,661 to Agrawal et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,389,028 to Bondarenko et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,011,537 to Slotznick.

20. As to claims 16-18, the Agrawal-Bondarenko combination does not explicitly teach diverting a request to a second server and providing the requester with entertainment while the resource is not available.

Slotznick teaches diverting a request to a second server and providing the requester with entertainment while the resource is not available (col. 24, line 9-49).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the Agrawal-Bondarenko combination regarding queueing requests with the teachings of Slotznick regarding the provision of entertainment to a waiting user because entertainment reduces the perceived wait time (Slotznick, col. 1, line 60-col. 2, line 11).

21. As to claims 21-56, they are rejected for the same reasons as claims 1-20.

Conclusion


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22. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Douglas B Blair whose telephone number is 703-305-5267. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jack Harvey can be reached on 703-305-9705. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Douglas Blair
DBB


JACK B. HARVEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER